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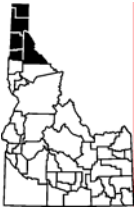
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Editors, Idaho Employment



Panhandle News

BENEWAH, BONNER, BOUNDARY, KOOTENAI & SHOSHONE COUNTIES

ECONOMIC TRENDS

After two years of extremely rapid job growth, Kootenai County's economy is slowing but remains strong. The county added about 3,200 nonfarm payroll jobs in both 2004 and 2005, reflecting annual job growth of 6.8 percent. Between May 2005 and May 2006, it added 2,270 jobs, a growth rate of 4.3 percent. While not as robust as the two preceding years, growth still is occurring at a relatively fast clip. Nationally, nonfarm payroll jobs grew 1.4 percent in the same period.

Almost all industries are expanding as shown in Panhandle Table 1. Construction continues to be the largest source of new jobs, adding about 650 between May 2005 and May 2006. Next comes retail, which added 360 jobs at a variety of stores. The opening of Northern Idaho Advanced Care Hospital in Post Falls plus the addition of 200 jobs by other medical and social-service providers accounted for 320 new jobs in education and health services. The US Bank customer service center, which opened last summer in Coeur d'Alene, is responsible for most of the 240 new jobs in financial services. The others come from increased employment with bank branches and real estate agencies. That number does not show the large growth in real estate agents, who are self-employed and therefore not on anyone's payroll.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Bonner County

- Kootenai Medical Center, the 246-bed hospital in Coeur d'Alene, plans to expand its cancer services to Sandpoint. The medical center hopes to open a 4,000 square-foot satellite center inside Bonner General Hospital in Sandpoint by late fall. Like most smaller hospitals, the 48-bed Sandpoint hospital has found creating its own oncology department cost-prohibitive so Bonner and Boundary county residents with cancer must go to Coeur d'Alene for care. That travel time involves considerable expense and can increase the exhaustion of cancer patients. For the last two years, the medical center has

Panhandle Table 1: Coeur d'Alene MSA Labor Force & Employment
Kootenai County

	May 2006*	Apr 2006	May 2005	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	70,140	70,050	68,740	0.1	2.0
Unemployed	2,550	2,460	2,860	3.7	-10.8
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.6%	3.5%	4.2%		
Total Employment	67,590	67,590	65,880	0.0	2.6
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	69,820	68,990	68,380	1.2	2.1
Unemployed	2,120	2,680	2,430	-20.9	-12.8
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.0%	3.9%	3.6%		
Total Employment	67,700	66,310	65,950	2.1	2.7
JOB BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	54,980	54,000	52,710	1.8	4.3
Goods-Producing Industries	10,950	10,670	10,150	2.6	7.9
Natural Resources & Mining	470	390	400	20.5	17.5
Construction	5,860	5,650	5,210	3.7	12.5
Manufacturing	4,620	4,630	4,540	-0.2	1.8
Wood Product Manufacturing	1,050	1,070	1,030	-1.9	1.9
Other Manufacturing	3,570	3,550	3,510	0.6	1.7
Service-Providing Industries	44,030	43,330	42,560	1.6	3.5
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	9,870	9,750	9,440	1.2	4.6
Wholesale Trade	1,410	1,410	1,330	0.0	6.0
Retail Trade	7,480	7,390	7,120	1.2	5.1
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	980	950	990	3.2	-1.0
Information	970	970	1,030	0.0	-5.8
Financial Activities	2,870	2,880	2,630	-0.3	9.1
Professional & Business Services	6,280	6,140	6,110	2.3	2.8
Educational & Health Services	5,560	5,570	5,240	-0.2	6.1
Leisure & Hospitality	7,420	7,000	7,290	6.0	1.8
Other Services	1,520	1,500	1,460	1.3	4.1
Government Education	3,730	3,760	3,620	-0.8	3.0
Government Administration	5,100	5,060	5,060	0.8	0.8
Government Tribes	710	700	680	1.4	4.4

* Preliminary estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

operated a two-day-a-week clinic at Creekside Health Center in Sandpoint, but it has not kept up with the rising demand from Bonner and Boundary counties and does not offer as many services as the new clinic will. When the new clinic opens, the existing clinic will close, and its staff will join a newly recruited oncologist, nurse practitioner and other workers at the new clinic, which will be open five days a week. Once remodeled, the Sandpoint space will include four examination rooms, two doctor offices, a pharmacy and an eight-bed infusion suite where patients will receive chemotherapy. Work should start before Labor Day and cost up to \$460,000. Bonner General will provide radiology services, diagnostic testing, social services and emergency and after-hours care to Kootenai Medical Center cancer patients in the Sandpoint location.

- The Sandpoint office of Idaho Commerce & Labor partnered with the Greater Sandpoint Chamber of Commerce and the Bonner County Daily Bee to hold the largest job fair ever in Bonner County. Fifty-two employers, including most of the area's fastest-growing businesses, had booths at the June 1 job fair at the Bonner County Fairgrounds. More than 600 job seekers attended.
- On Memorial Day weekend, David and Teri Pool opened Korner Market next to the newly remodeled Korner Club Restaurant and Bar at the corner of Highway 57 and Luby Bay Road in Priest Lake. The new store offers a wide selection of high quality groceries, including fresh meats and seafood, local organic fruits and vegetables and wines and beers. It also contains a candy store for kids of all ages and a gift store selling items made by local artists. The restaurant, also owned by the Pools, serves steaks, burgers, pizza, salad, ice cream and espresso.
- Jamie Stidham recently opened Evolution Fitness for Women, a center with state-of-art equipment for resistance and cardiovascular exercise. The center also offers Pilates, yoga and classes in neuromuscular integrative action, a cardiovascular activity combining martial arts and dance. The fitness center in Ponderay caters to a wide variety of ages and fitness levels.

Boundary County

- On May 17, Bonners Ferry residents and many farmers began to worry about the rising Kootenai River, which flows through the county's most populated area and along some of its most productive farm land. The rising water damaged levees, increasing concerns. Local, state and federal agencies responded as did hundreds of volunteers. Sandbags were piled up to protect farmland, low-lying roads, houses along the river and parts of downtown Bonners Ferry including the Kootenai River Inn & Casino. After weeks of worry, the river went above flood stage of 1,765 feet on June 17, peaked at 1,767 feet and began receding on June 21. High water and seepage caused up to \$8 million in crop damage along with significant loss of topsoil, which will reduce the quality of future crops. As the river recedes, it is leaving behind large pools of standing water that could breed mosquitoes, which may carry West Nile disease. The Army Corps of Engineers estimates that it will cost about \$54 million to repair the levees.
- With its population growing and tourism flourishing, Bonners Ferry is a great place to start new businesses. Nita Hilliard is one of several entrepreneurs to take the leap. She recently opened Mercari Gifts. Her specialty gift store displays items from her catalogues including porcelain dolls, western art, home decorations, bath products and gifts for children. Under the Sun opened May 5 in downtown Bonners Ferry. The store, owned by Shelley Yount, sells clothing, art, coffee, tea and gifts. It also has a lunch counter serving sandwiches, salads, wraps and organic espresso. In early May, Michael Boge

opened his new business, Zip's drive-in, in a building formerly occupied by the "R" Place fast food restaurant. The Zip's chain serves burgers, fries, shakes and other fast food. Kelly Mentado and Patricia Vollendroff opened Nichole's Food Mart, Jack-n-Pat's restaurant and a Conoco gas station in a shared building on U.S. Highway 95 South in early June. Boundary County's first artist's co-op, Groove Studio, celebrated its grand opening June 3 in the newly renovated Randall Day Building. On sale are paintings, sculpture, jewelry, photography and furniture made by local artists. Owners Sam and Carolyn Testa hope it will synergize downtown Bonners Ferry.

Kootenai County

- Coeur d'Alene hosted the Ironman Triathlon on June 25. More than 2,000 participants from all over the world swam 2.4 miles in Lake Coeur d'Alene, rode their bicycles 112 miles and then ran a 26.2-mile marathon between 7 a.m. and midnight. The Coeur d'Alene Chamber of Commerce estimates that the Ironman brings about \$5 million to the Coeur d'Alene-Spokane area. Hotels along Interstate 90 from the Spokane airport to Wallace were flashing "No Vacancy" signs by the Thursday before the event, which also was the same weekend as Spokane's HoopFest. Traditionally, hotels in the area had quite a few openings until tourists started pouring in around the Fourth of July. This was the fourth year that Ironman was held in Coeur d'Alene. Under its current contract with Ironman North America, Coeur d'Alene also will host next June's triathlon. Ironman North America has announced that it would like to continue to hold the triathlon in Coeur d'Alene, and another five-year contract is being negotiated.
- The internationally known artist, Thomas Kinkade, came to Coeur d'Alene in June for the ground-breaking on a residential development featuring five houses identical to manor houses in his paintings. The houses in the Gates of Coeur d'Alene development will occupy hillside lots near Wolf Lodge with views of Lake Coeur d'Alene and cost about \$5 million each.
- Harrison, a town of 282 residents on the eastern shore of south Lake Coeur d'Alene, continues to add more services for tourists. Its location on the 79-mile Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes, following the rail line that used to run from Plummer to Mullan, makes it a haven for bicyclists and lake enthusiasts. That's why Dana Bird opened Northwest Rentals on Memorial Day weekend. The shop, located below Rose's Landing, rents Surreys — six-wheeled cycles resembling carriages—and "hotshots" — three-wheeled cycles. Rusty and Teri Riberich recently opened Hi Water Adventures Inc. in an office overlooking Harrison's City Park, where they rent powerboats and kayaks. Before it opened, the nearest boat rental was in Coeur d'Alene.
- Advanced Input Systems, a manufacturer employing 320 people in Coeur d'Alene, has developed an infec-

tion-control keyboard that is being marketed under the brand name Medigenic. Designed for hospitals and medical offices, the keyboard keeps track of how much it's been used and reminds people to clean it and its mouse. A disable key allows the keyboard to remain on while it is being cleaned. Both the keyboard and mouse can be cleaned with strong disinfectants, reducing the risk of spreading infectious diseases. With hospital-acquired infections on the rise, the new keyboard is likely to sell extremely well. Advanced Input Systems makes custom control panels, keyboards and other input devices for the health-care, electronics and defense industries.

- The geographic heart of Kootenai County's health-care industry is the Ironwood area around Kootenai Medical Center in Coeur d'Alene. More than 1,650 people work at the hospital, and another 1,700 people work at clinics, medical offices and other health-care service providers in the Ironwood area. Now another concentration of medical services is emerging in Post Falls, where Northwest Specialty Hospital, North Idaho Immediate Care, various clinics and doctors' offices are located. Together, these medical enterprises employ about 420 people. One of the latest additions is a 21,000 square-foot building of Little Smiles Pediatric Dentistry, which moved from downtown; Jaeger Curtis Orthodontics, which is expanding from Coeur d'Alene; Access Endodontic Specialists, which is moving from Ironwood in September; Spokane Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, which is expanding from its two Spokane locations, and the office of Dr. Les Timm, who is opening an office this fall for complex dentistry and facial reconstruction.
- Since 1995, the number of bank and credit union branches serving Kootenai County has risen from 30 to 46, and more are on the way. Spokane Teachers Credit Union broke ground on an 8,960 square-foot branch in Post Falls in June. It will be the credit union's first branch in Idaho. When it opens in December, it will hire up to 15 people.
- The high level of construction activity in Kootenai County is fostering the opening and expansion of building material, household appliance and related stores. Window World recently opened a 1,740 square-foot outlet selling windows, doors and vinyl siding in Coeur d'Alene, and Idaho Lights is building an 8,000 square-foot store, which will sell commercial and residential lighting fixtures when it opens this fall in Coeur d'Alene.
- Two restaurants entered the Coeur d'Alene market in June. Bullfrog's, a New York-style deli also offering fruit juices and protein shakes, opened in the back of the Eclectic Artisans Gallery on Coeur d'Alene Avenue. The Panda Express chain opened a quick-service restaurant serving Chinese food. Kootenai County is home to about 250 restaurants, employing 4,600 people. In the county, there are about 1.84 restaurants for every 1,000 people compared to 1.46 restaurants for every 1,000 people nationally. The difference indicates how

much more important tourists are to the Kootenai County economy than to the U.S. economy.

- Puttin' Around, an 18-hole miniature golf course, recently opened in Post Falls.

Shoshone County

- When Idaho Gov. Jim Risch visited Wallace on June 23, he brought a \$100,000 grant from Idaho Commerce & Labor to help fix a city street where a large portion of the roadway has begun slipping away from the main road. A harsh winter followed by a rainy spring caused the slippage. Combined with another \$100,000 grant from the Local Highway Technical Assistance Council, the grant will pay most of the \$225,000 required to construct a retaining wall, install base rock, new drainage and sewers and lay new pavement.
- Gov. Jim Risch presented a check to the Central Shoshone Water District on June 23 representing a \$450,000 Community Development Block grant. The money will help the district defray the \$1 million cost of replacing two 100-year-old water tanks in Wardner. In the Kingston area, where new developments require the district to increase capacity, it is replacing two water pumps that pump 3,800 gallons of water per minute. The new pumps will pump 7,000 gallons of water per minute.
- High-speed Internet access has been on Shoshone County's economic development wish list for a few years, and now Thin Air Online is bringing wireless, high-speed Internet access to the Silver Valley. Using broadband fiber optics, it will offer faster Internet connections than current servers. Faster Internet services can help existing businesses increase their productivity and attract new businesses that require high-speed Internet. Thin Air Online currently is erecting more Internet reception towers in the Silver Valley. It hopes to eventually expand outside the Silver Valley to provide Internet service to other rural areas of northern Idaho and western Montana.

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Overall newsletter	1	2	3	4	5

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